



**RHODE ISLAND
NATURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION
COMMISSION**

OPEN SPACE GRANTS

***APPLICATION PROCESS
2006 GRANT ROUND***

The Natural Heritage Preservation Commission, through the Governor's Advisory Council, will be evaluating each application received for funding from the Rhode Island Open Space Bond Fund.

The primary goal of this program is the preservation of open space that possesses natural, ecological, agricultural or scenic values, by purchase of fee title to, development rights, or conservation easements over eligible open space. Each application will be evaluated in reference to the protection of these values.

Who is eligible to apply?

- # The applicant must be either a municipality of the State of Rhode Island, land trust, non-profit organization or a charitable trust incorporated in Rhode Island, or an organization existing as a private non-profit organization in another state or the District of Columbia among whose purposes is the preservation of open space.

What property is eligible?

- # The property must be open, with no man-made structures to be maintained, and have a scenic, natural, agricultural or ecological value.

What conditions will the property be subject to?

The applicant must certify that any property acquired will be kept in its natural, scenic, and open condition in perpetuity.

- # A conservation easement running in favor of the State or Rhode Island dedicating the project area permanently to open space preservation will be executed.
- # Any property to which grant monies are applied must be managed in accordance with an approved "Management Plan" which shall set forth such procedures and requirements as are necessary to preserve the property's open, natural, scenic, agricultural and ecological values.
- # Suitable permanent public acknowledgment of financial assistance at the project site is required by the State. Use of a symbol is optional and we encourage its use as part of the park signs, folders and literature.

Eligible Project Costs:

- # Costs associated with the acquisition of the property or interests in land are eligible for reimbursement. Eligible project costs are appraisal, survey, title search and title insurance expenses. All such costs must be incurred after a grant application has been approved or after the applicant has received a waiver from DEM allowing such

costs to be incurred in advance of the project approval. Costs incurred prior to the grant award (with DEM approval) are the applicant's risk.

How to Apply:

- # Application Forms will be available September 18, 2006 from the:
Natural Heritage Preservation Commission
Department of Environmental Management
Division of Planning and Development
235 Promenade Street
Providence, RI 02908

or from the DEM Website: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/plandev/grants.htm>

- # Complete the application form and submit an **original and six (6) copies** by **4:00 p.m., November 3, 2006**, to the Natural Heritage Preservation Commission at the address shown above. Applications received after the filing deadline will not be considered for funding during this round and will be returned to the applicant. Such applications may be resubmitted during a subsequent round.

Careful attention to supplying the materials requested and to answering each question on the Application Form will greatly assist the Commission. Please answer, as completely as possible, all the questions on the Application Form. If more space is needed additional pages may be used by identifying each response by the number preceding the question on the application form. **Please remember to sign the form.** The authorized organization or government official must sign the form. If you have any questions, please call DEM at 222-2776 extension 4301 or email joe.dias@dem.ri.gov.

- # The application must include a description of the proposed use of the property, and must specify how the grant funds are to be used to preserve the property and the unique features that it contains.
- # The applicant must provide evidence of its governing board's consent to make application, and its commitment to abide by the representations made in the application.
- # A form giving the consent of the owner of the proposed property, to inspect and appraise the property, shall be signed and included with the application.
- # A dated project boundary map which clearly delineates the area under the conversion provisions of the rules and regulations shall be included in the application package and a more accurate map than the current one on file may be submitted upon closing of the grant.

After each of the applications are ranked according to score, the Commission will recommend a priority list to the Director of the Department of Environmental Management for funding. The Director will award grants in the order of priority recommended by the

Commission. Notwithstanding the above, the Director, with the advice of the commission, shall have the authority to adjust such grant awards, so that no one community receives a disproportionate amount of the funds available and so that a reasonable geographic distribution of funds is achieved.

Certification that all other necessary funds are available must be submitted prior to the release of grant funds. Applicants may use the value of interests or land acquired by donation as a local match provided that the value shown as a donation is sustained by a ***Full Self Contained Appraisal Report*** and the donation is part of the project application. Projects with a land value of less than \$50,000 may submit a "Letter of Opinion Appraisal".

Grants from Rhode Island Open Space and Recreational Area Bonds are for 50% of the approved project costs. The maximum grant award will be \$ 400,000.00.

How the Decision is made:

- # The Commission realizes that it will not be able to preserve all of the threatened open land in the state. Therefore, it has set up selection procedures and criteria for determining which parcels to preserve. Each application will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria:

**Rhode Island Natural Heritage Preservation Commission
Scoring Criteria for Open Space Grants**

The Natural Heritage Preservation Commission and the Natural Heritage Preservation Commission Advisory Committee shall evaluate grant applications based on the following scoring criteria. (100 points total)

(A) HABITAT PROTECTION

(25 points)

1. Critical and/or Uncommon Habitat: The property supports critical and/or uncommon, ecologically fragile habitat, or is a unique ecological community in the state or region.

Habitat/Community Types considered:

Estuarine Intertidal Wetlands
Freshwater Tidal Marsh
Coastal Plain Pond and/or Pondshore
Open Peatland (Bogs and Fens)
Vernal Pools
Morainal Grasslands
Maritime/Inland Dune System
Pitch Pine/Scrub Oak Barrens
Calcareous Habitats (forests, outcrops, etc.)

2. Common Community Type: The property is representative of typical ecological communities in Rhode Island. This criterion seeks to preserve high-quality examples of common communities that support productive and diverse biological systems.

3. Habitat Diversity: The property includes managed open land that provides habitat supporting native animals/plants.

4. Urban Habitat Protection: Property is located in an urban or densely developed area where the habitat, open space, and/or educational values are particularly significant or unique.

5. Rare/Endangered Species: The property supports or is capable of supporting rare/endangered species. The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program current lists of rare/endangered species are the references used under this criterion.

Descriptions of all Rhode Island community types, and current lists of rare/endangered species, can be found at:

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/plandev/heritage/index.htm>

(B) GREENWAY OR REGIONAL LINKAGES (20 points)

1. Property is contiguous to other protected land.
2. Property is contiguous to a river/stream as defined in Section 2-1-20(j) of the Rhode Island Fresh Water Wetlands Act. As defined in this section - "a body of water designated as a perennial stream by the United States Department of Interior Geologic Survey on 7.5 minute series topographic maps."
3. Property provides public recreational opportunities.
4. Property connects urban community to protected lands or parks.
5. Other

The application must reference in detail the linkages that relate to the acquisition proposal. Up to 4 points may be awarded per category.

(C) PLANNING CONSISTENCY (20 points)

1. Acquisition is consistent with Local Comprehensive Plan.
2. Acquisition is consistent with a Local Open Space Plan.
3. Acquisition is consistent with a Regional or Watershed Plan.
4. Acquisition is identified in the Greenways/Greenspace Element of the State Guide Plan.

The application must reference in detail the elements of each plan that relate to the acquisition proposal. Up to 5 points may be awarded per plan reference.

(D) RESOURCE PROTECTION (15 points)

1. Fisheries Resources:
 - a. Are there water bodies stocked for recreational fishing?
2. Forest Resources:
 - a. Has a Forest Stewardship Plan been prepared?
3. Agricultural Resources:
 - a. What is the agricultural acreage and type of crops produced?
4. Cultural, Geological, or Scenic Resources:

- a. Is area identified by RI Statewide Preservation Commission?
- 5. Biological Resources:
 - a. Shellfish beds
 - b. Migratory bird stopover areas
 - c. Champion trees

This category represents the relationship and efficiency between the type of acquisition proposed and the value of the sustainable resource being protected. For example, the acquisition of a conservation easement on forestland may provide for a continued timber resource value and also protect the natural habitat and/or biological resource. Acquisition may also provide for protection of cultural or historical artifacts. Up to 15 points awarded.

(E) WATER RESOURCE PROTECTION (15 points)
1. *Public Water Supply or Groundwater Recharge Area.* The land is identified on the Drinking Water Supply Map which is available at: www.dem.ri.gov/maps/index.htm

Up to 10 points may be awarded based on the size of the property and percentage of land located within the watershed of the Public Water Supply or Groundwater Recharge Area.

2. *Flood Protection.* In coastal areas, the property is located within 1000 feet of tidal water body, and is designated on Flood Insurance Rate Maps published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as Special Flood Hazard Areas (V and A Zones). Up to 5 points may be awarded.

(F) MULTI-COMMUNITY APPLICATION (5 points)
The property to be acquired or preserved is located in 2 or more communities. The application for funding requires the consent of the Governing boards for each agency listed.